(c) if so, what action Government propose to take or have taken so far against the indicted BCCL officials in each case and if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI P. A. SANGMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Chairman cum Managing Director, Bharat Coking Coal Ltd. is a Presidential appointee and action. if any, is taken by the Ministry of Coal in the case of such appointees.

(c) After due examination, Government have decided that no action may be taken against the present CMD, BCCL on the basis of the report of the Governmental Committee. As for other officials, one General Manager and three Agents have been removed from service, while six Agents have been exonerated of the charges against them. Action in the case of remaining indicated officers is in progress at various stages.

New Guidelines under MPs Local Area Development Scheme

*168. SHRI T. VENKATRAM REDDY :
DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR :

Will the MINISTER OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether any new guidelines or instruction have been issued about the M.Ps. Local Area Development Scheme:

(b) if so, what are those guidelines;

(c) if not, what are the reasons for not issuing such guidelines; and

(d) in case of a disput between the Collector and the M.P. whether any particular scheme falls within the scope of this scheme or not, who will finally decide the issue ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO) : (a) No. Sir.

(b) The question does not arise.

(c) and (d) The revised guidelines are under consideration.

Joint Venture for Coal Production

*169. SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) what are the names of foreign or Indian companies who have offered for joint venture in India for coal production;

(b) when these offers were made; and

(c) what is Government's response thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI P. A. SANGMA) : (a) and (b) Consequent to the amendment of Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 in June 1993 allowing private sector participation in coal mining for power generation. Coal India Limited (CIL) have received proposals from following foreign/Indian parties who have shown interest for forming joints ventures with CIL for coal mining :—

(1) Joy Manufacturing Company.
(2) International Longwall (India) Ltd.
(3) White Industries Australia Ltd.
(4) BHP-Minerals International Inc. Corporation.
(5) Indo-Gulf Fertilizers & Chemicals Ltd.
(6) Hindalco Industries Ltd.
(7) MM Bhagat & Company.
(8) Blackhill Minerals Phy, Ltd.
(9) Eastern Minerals & Trading Agency.
(10) CESC Ltd.
(11) M/s. Nippon Denro Ispat Ltd.

These offers were received during the years 1993 and 1994.

(c) Government has not approved any joint venture proposal for coal mining.

Visit of Chinese Delegation

*170. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA : SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Chinese delegation that visited India recently, including the one accompanying the Chinese Defence Minister, stressed on steps to improve Sino-Indian co-operation on trade investment, science and technology and manpower development in India;

(b) if so, the main proposals made in this regard; and

(c) the Government's reaction thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) In June 1994, HE Mme Wu Yi, Minister for Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation of China led a delegation on visit to India, which made proposals including on steps to improve Sino-Indian co-operation in trade, investment, and science &

technology. The main proposals were for diversification of trade to non-traditional products, further development of border trade, development of infrastructure for bilateral trade, encouragement to exchange of business visits, encouragement to investment in each other's country, and exchanges in technology and projects including joint design and consultancy services.

During the visit of Chinese Vice-Minister for Metallurgical Industry H.E. Mr. Wu Xichun to India in July 1994, it was agreed to set up three working groups, in the areas of technical cooperation in the steel sector, iron ore and manganese ore, and on imports and exports of steel products.

(c) During the visit of H. E. Mme Wu Xi, both sides signed a bilateral Trade Protocol, and held the Fifth Session of China-India Joint Group on Economic Relations and Trade, Science and Technology. The salient points of agreement were on finalisation of a mutually agreed list of trade items for 1994-95, adoption of practical measures to diversify bilateral trade, achieve trade balance and lift bilateral trade to a new level, promotion of exchange of business visits, extension of the border trade, fostering and expansion of economic cooperation especially in setting up joint ventures, and explore specific measures for cooperation in the field of science & technology.

Misuse of Vabal Scheme

*171. SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item that appeared in the Times of India dated 29th November, 1994 regarding the misuse of the VABAL scheme, resulting in huge loss to the exchequer;

(b) whether it is a fact that inspite of the good intentions of Government introducing VABAL Scheme, the unscrupulous traders etc. have been misusing the whole scheme resulting in huge losses to the Government exchequer;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the industry had brought to the notice of Government the clandestine import of over 20,000 MT of PFY through misuse of polymer VABAL Scheme, resulting in a revenue loss of over Rs. 350 crores in the first half of the current financial year and a setback to the indigenous industry;

(d) whether Government have initiated investigations in order to ensure action against the guilty in the said unscrupulous activity and with what results; and

(e) if no action has been taken so far, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Investigations so far have not revealed any large scale misuse of the VABAL Scheme.

(c) to (e) Government has come across a news report alleging huge losses of excise revenue as a result of duty free import of POY under fake documents and sale of the imported POY in domestic market inviolation of Excise Rules. Exchange transactions under the Havala route have also been alleged. The specific case cited in the report is being investigated by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade.

Export of Flowers

*172. SHRI RAJUBHAIA. PARMAR : SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a comprehensive plan to explore and exploit the export market for flowers;

(b) what is the result of the study, if any conducted about the export potential of different varieties of flowers to different countries; and

(c) what steps have been taken, infrastructure created and system evolved for optimum exploitation and utilisation of the export potential of flowers?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The Government of India had in 1988 set up an Expert Group on development of floriculture in the country which submitted its report in 1989. The terms of reference included identification of floriculture products having export potential and evolving policy measures to facilitate export production. Floriculture was also identified as an Exterme Focus Segment for development of exports. An extreme Focus Group constituted in this context lands Government study also found good potential for the export of flowers like roses, carnations and chrysenthamum to West Europe, Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan and West Asia.

(c) Some steps taken to optimize export potential of the floriculture sector include :—

1 The Ministry of Agriculture as substantially stepped up outlays for enhancing production and productivity with the objective of generating exportable surpluses.

2. The plan quarantine procedures have been streamlined to facilitate exports